

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Courper.*



AT THE LOCKED GATE.

A YOUNG WIFE'S STORY.

CHAPTER XIII.

THESE were happy times for the children, who, either with their grandmother or aunt, were much downstairs, quiet and obedient for a few minutes, at others merry as crickets, and quite as noisy. Colonel Demarcay claimed my services, keeping me sometimes reading to him for many hours. He had suffered from ophthalmia when in the East,

and gladly spared his eyes by the exercise of mine, occasionally endeavouring to reward me by comparisons between the two Mrs. Demarcays, always in my favour. The former never read to him; she could not, he said, get through two lines without stumbling, and those she could read she did not understand. To hear him talk, Anna Demarcay was a little, flax-haired toy, with as much sense in her head as you find in a German doll; to her mother and sister she was a lost angel, beautiful as a flower when on earth,

and now a saint in heaven. To Victor she was as the sun to the world, as the dew to the earth, as the voice of song to the life of a bird.

Mrs. Rogers and her daughter, knowing how my mornings were generally employed, found their own amusements and had it all their own way at Lornedale. In my absence Victor did the honours, and was a kind, attentive son, attending to the old lady's wishes, and gentle and patient with Bertha, whom I thought sometimes imperious and exacting. With me she was indifferent, but not disagreeable—perhaps because, being so much with Colonel Demarcey, my presence was seldom a restraint upon her.

One afternoon in the middle of September the children were to have a treat, the prospect of which had set Hubert's legs and Nora's tongue in movement all the morning. Their mother's relatives had taken the charge of them very much off my hands. Nevertheless, in the interest of Nora, I enjoined rest by way of preparation for the anticipated pleasure. It was to be a nutting party; Bertha had planned it; she and Victor, the children and Grover, and their tall cousin, as old as their papa, who was expected that day, were to compose it. Hubert was never tired, he said, and told his aunt that he could run about all the morning, and walk just as well in the afternoon. As she clearly took his part, I yielded that point, but insisted upon little Nora coming indoors. In a passion of tears the child resisted, and finally bit my hand to make me let go.

"Oh, Nora!" I said, reproachfully, "you know I am only trying to make the whole afternoon one of pleasure to you, and wish you to be a little quiet now, that you may enjoy yourself the more. If you are tired you will not be happy."

"You don't, you don't; you tell stories; Hubert says so, and nurse says she knows it too. You are cross, and not nice, and don't love us a bit; and I won't love you either, any more than Hubert does."

All this she said with her dark eyes flashing like little sparks; and, finding I did not relax my hold, in spite of her kicking and twisting, she threw herself down on the grass. I could have cried with sorrow and mortification as my pet and plaything, turning recreant, ignored our past affectionate intercourse, and, unconscious of my solicitude for her, put me to such grief and shame, with Bertha and Hubert looking on. For a moment principle went down before my cowardice, and I thought of leaving her to her temper and her aunt, though knowing that she would be the worse for it, as correction from me was likely to be misconstrued. She had wriggled herself free, and was lying on the grass, screaming with all the force of her lungs, while I stood by debating with myself what was best to be done. "Get up, Nora," I said, gravely, with a heavy weight at my heart, from the difficulty I foresaw in carrying out the training which was to make her gentle, good, and loving, my sole reward out of the onerous duties that lay before me; "if you throw so much strength away in naughty passion now, you will be ill by-and-by."

The calm, cold tone struck the child as strange; for Nurse Grover was accustomed to meet passion with passion, even with Hubert, when he offended her. With Nora this was of frequent occurrence, and brought many a slap upon her young shoulders. Once I forbade the hasty punishment, when Mrs. Grover pertly replied that she knew what she was

doing, and loved the children better than I did. I intended to mention the circumstance to Victor and get him to interfere, but the Rogers family arrived, and then came that cruel revelation of facts made to Bertha, and since I had no will, no desire, to talk to him about the children. I meant to do well by them as far as I could, exercising my best judgment in their behalf, but had no inclination to put myself forward as one to whom he ought to feel obliged.

"Get up, Nora, or I shall leave you there." A happy thought, for though the threat involved nothing particularly disagreeable for the child, it was still a threat, and one I could carry out.

"Oh, Miss Nora, that I should have lived to see this day!" said a voice close by. It was Patrick at one of the back windows, looking on the spot where this scene was passing.

"Get up, Nora," said another voice; "nurse is coming."

The second speaker was Hubert, who, by dint of hard tugging, got his sister on her feet just as Mrs. Grover reached us.

"Hey-day! What is the matter now—what is it, my own darling?" and because she had some inkling of the truth, she threw her arms round the still-sobbing child, and pressed her to her bosom, saying, "Tell me all about it, dear; who has hurt you, who has scolded my pet?"

"No one," said Hubert, boldly; "Nora has been in a passion."

He stood in front of us, a fine picture, his face flushed with play and excitement, wishing to be just, and to speak the truth.

"Who put her in a passion?" asked Grover.

That question changed the face of things, and presented an intricacy of thought which at once arrested his championship. Deeper he could not reason; he gave me a perplexed look, and after the silence of a second rejoined Bertha, who stood aloof all the time. I do not think he thought me entirely in the right, and yet Nora was decidedly naughty. The question, Who put her in a passion? presented a difficulty to his childish comprehension. "It was the taking her indoors that did it," I heard him say to his aunt when he left us.

The battle was now between me and Grover. Sooner or later I knew it must come, and also that I must win it or lose all hope of being useful to the children, and through them to my husband. To leave Nora under Grover's influence at the present moment would be an abdication of authority, which I should ever after regret. Now or never must I stand my ground. There was, I fear, some pride in the resolution; I hope and believe there was some principle also, for the effort was painful and the result uncertain. "Miss Nora cannot go with you now, nurse," I said, firmly, taking the child's other hand as Grover was about to lead her away; "she has been very naughty, and must be brought to understand her misconduct before she can be forgiven."

I had too much regard for Nora's truthfulness to insist upon those expressions of regret that are too thoughtlessly put into children's mouths before their little hearts are touched.

"Oh, my poor motherless lamb, how hard it goes with you; come to your dear old nurse!" burst forth Grover, opening her arms to clasp the child in another embrace, and would have succeeded had I not quickly stepped between them, speaking even more resolutely than before.

"Miss Nora will not come to you until she is good; not, I think, before her dinner, nor perhaps this afternoon."

"I will, I will, I will go to nurse!" she called out, bursting into another passion of tears and sobs, which shook her little frame.

"When you are good, and not before. Nurse must go away and leave you with me. I will have no interference when I find it necessary to reprove or to punish." Evidently she had no intention of obeying me; on the contrary, she began to drag Nora away.

"Leave her with me," I said, imperatively, "or you will compel me to appeal to your master."

From the very fitness of things, Victor, whatever his own feelings might be, must decide in my favour, but this was a step I was unwilling to take, knowing that it would be disagreeable to him, independent of the consequences that might arise. It might reach the ears of the colonel, who in his wrath was likely to vex Victor by sweeping Mrs. Grover out of the house. The threat to which I was compelled only served to increase her anger.

"Things are come to a pretty pass!" she answered, fiercely, "when children are taught to be disrespectful, and disobey the nurse who loves them so dearly. I will speak to Mr. Demarcay myself."

She turned hastily away and went towards the house, where I had seen Victor enter about half an hour before. By suddenly snatching her hand out of mine, Nora freed herself and hurried after her. Walking a little way in pursuit, I saw her join Grover just as her skirts disappeared in the doorway of Victor's sitting-room, whither I would not follow. Going to the drawing-room instead, I found Mrs. Rogers dividing her attention between her knitting and a book. As we only exchanged occasional remarks, my thoughts were but little interrupted, one of the most painful being the fear of misconstruction on the part of my husband. I had been so bitterly incensed, would he think me capable of venting my displeasure in harshness and injustice towards the children? Nora's passionate accusations, supported by the clever, malicious insinuations of Grover, would make out a case against me, and would perhaps be a picture too human to be entirely disbelieved. My conduct was surely under discussion, for before long I heard Hubert called by his father, and also the sound of his eager feet rushing through the hall. Mrs. Rogers, kept quiet by having made a mistake in her knitting, left me to the book I was ostensibly reading, but there was no sense in the lines before me. I was wondering why lots were so unequal, the distribution of good things so partial; why to some there was no sweetness, whilst others drink of a cup that has no bitterness in it, and, after life is ended, continue in the memory beloved and cherished. Of course, I was comparing the two Mrs. Demarcays, and, I fear, arraigning the ways of Providence. If my reflections had no other effect, they beguiled the time, for I was surprised when the door opened and Victor entered, leading in his little girl, who held fast by his hand, her chest heaving slightly, but smiling her own pretty, innocent smile, like sunshine breaking through the clouds after a storm.

"My little Nora is come to ask your forgiveness; I think—I hope she is sorry for having been so troublesome," he said, placing her at my knee and retiring a step or two backwards.

Shyly and softly Nora laid a tiny hand upon mine

and looked up into my face. I was too glad to be friends again with my little pet to wait for words of apology, too thankful also for this poor fragile link to the domestic affections, though knowing how brittle it was. It would take years of patient training to fix that butterfly nature, and many sorrowful hours besides, I feared—many disappointments ere the goal was reached; yet this was my best—my sole prospect of exercising the tenderness of my woman's heart. I could not bear to lose my little Nora nor her childish endearments, inconstant as I felt her to be. Lifting her on my lap, I kissed her with all the warmth of a yearning, unsatisfied affection, and then, unable to restrain myself, hid my face upon her cheek.

"Mamma is crying," said Nora, obliging me to droop my head lower as she raised hers to look at her father; then clasping her hands round my neck, she added, "Don't cry, dear; I will never, never be naughty any more."

Raining her childish kisses upon me, she said all kinds of loving words—everything that she thought would give me pleasure.

"I love you, dear; I love you. I will love you always, always, and I will always call you mamma, I will; nurse and Hubert may say no, but I will, I will!"

Till then Victor had stood by in silence. Though I had not ventured to look up, I could fancy he was looking down upon us with complacency; but now he went away softly, without a word to either of us. The door closed gently, and before long Nora was asleep in my arms. The passion and the trouble having worn her out, the song I murmured over her as she nestled down soon lulled her into a happy sleep. It is not necessary to say that she was permitted to accompany the others in the afternoon.

The weather, though autumnal, was peculiarly fine. Not an idea of the coming winter was in the gay asters and other hardy flowers that flaunted their gaudy colours in the sunshine, ignorant how short a time they yet had to live, or that that very night an ungenial frost might strike them to the heart, and bend their upright forms, replacing their glorious beauty with sad signs of decay and death.

There were several false starts, something had been forgotten. At the last minute occurred another and a longer delay. Mrs. Rogers having made up her mind to accompany the party, greatly tried her grandson's patience by the slowness of her preparations. The baskets, hooked sticks, servants to help carry, dogs to run and bark, all were ready at last, and I watched them as they went off, talking merrily, taking a short cut over the dry grass towards the copse, where the nuts and the berries were abundant.

Colonel Demarcay, supposing me to be at home keeping Mrs. Rogers company, as I had said I would do, was out riding with the groom. Happily, he knew nothing of her change of mind, or I should not have been left to myself. Often he had offered to procure me the best lady's horse that could be had, but, on the plea that I did not know how to ride, I always negatived the proposition, knowing well that it would only be another chain, instead of a pleasure. If Victor had asked me, or even if there had been a chance of his going with us, it would have been different; but he, like myself, showed no particular desire to be with his uncle more than he could help, and always rode alone.

The colonel had been gone some time before the party started, for they waited for the big cousin who did not come. Bertha kept them back as long as she could, until Victor said it would be too late for the children if they delayed longer. So they went at last, and I watched them from my window. The earth was dry and green, with the crisp leaves bronzed in the sun lying under foot, and not a cloud in the sky, only a tiny fleck here and there, making the blue all the deeper. Hubert was missing from the group, and yet I had seen him close to his father a few seconds before. Not long had I to wonder where he was. Noisy steps came suddenly outside my door, which was burst open, and the boy, panting and flushed with eagerness, rushed into the room.

"Won't you come with us? Oh, do come, do come, and make haste! Make haste, for they are all off, but we can easily run after them."

Did Hubert come of himself, or was he sent? Either way I was sorry to refuse him, and yet was in no mood to join them. Besides, I really thought they would all be happier without me. Hubert was in too great a hurry to spend much time in urging me. When in a few words I declined going, he looked at me with surprised, earnest eyes, and then ran back to the door.

"I will bring you a bunch of fives if I find it," he said, as he crossed the threshold and clattered down the stairs, shouting as he went over the lawn, "She won't come, she won't!"

Perhaps Colonel Demarcay might then have pardoned the obnoxious pronoun had he heard it, but I am not sure; I know I did. Hubert was no favourite with him, and met with no indulgence.

The next interruption was from Adams. Always kind, there was an additional gentleness in her voice and manner as she hovered about me, regretting that I did not go out enough to benefit my health. "You have not change enough," she said. "It is a pity you did not go with them to-day, as Mrs. Rogers went. There is only sameness in those drives with the colonel."

Perhaps Patrick had told her of Nora's delinquency, or perhaps she spoke from innate sympathy. None of the servants liked Colonel Demarcay except Patrick, and they, I fancy, pitied me for having so much of his society.

"I would rather be alone," I said, somewhat ungraciously; and yet I was not thinking of her, but of the heart-isolation that seemed my inalienable portion.

"It is good sometimes, but not always," she answered. "Miss Everett took pains to teach me that there is a time for everything."

Yes, thought I, even a time to laugh, if one could but find it—which I never can.

"A time to weep and a time to dance, a time to heal and a time to build up," repeated Adams, as if speaking to herself, though her comment was addressed to me. "There is also a time to pray. How comfortable to know that the Almighty always hears, that he is always at home, and never goes where we cannot find him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER Adams left me I thought I would go out. Passing Victor's dressing-room, the open door suggested a great temptation. Within was the portrait

I so longed to see. This was an opportunity not to be lost. Now, or it might be never, could I see this idol—this memory that must ever stand as a separating wall between Victor and me. He kept it usually in his dressing-case, so I had heard from my maid. The house was still and empty, none of the servants were likely to come that way, and from the window I had watched the nutting party out of sight. Over the park they had gone towards the copse, into the green lane between red-berried hedges, where the bramble gloried in its brightly-coloured fruit, and the hazel-stubbs had their coveted nut-bunches hidden among their leaves. I entered the room; the dressing-case stood on the table, but locked, and no keys were near. Another door was open into the room beyond, recently prepared for Victor on the plea that he sometimes sat up very late at night, and did not like to disturb me; so he said to Mrs. Dixon. I knew that he had been stung by my passionate reproaches, and preferred being alone; besides, henceforth what could there be between us but distrust on my part, and indifference, no longer disguised, on his? The veil had been rent too completely for either of us to deceive or be deceived any more. Feeling almost like a stranger and intruder in my own house, after listening to make assurance doubly sure that no one was coming, I advanced into the farther room. On the table a small maroon *étui* attracted my attention. Touching the spring, it flew open, revealing a fair, smiling face, delicate and young, with a profusion of hair that, even in the picture, seemed rippling with a gold sparkle among its luxuriant meshes. Had I not known of the existence of the portrait, the strong likeness to Hubert made it easy to recognise his mother, only fairer and softer, and with less character than her son.

It was some satisfaction to find only beauty in my formidable rival, being prepared on that ground to yield her the palm; had there been much intellect or intelligence, I should have cried with envy. There was a certain feeble gratification in reflecting that the absence of beauty was a negative fault; that if my lot on that point were fixed, I had some compensation in those gifts which time might increase rather than diminish. In this strain I tried to argue; but it was cold work, and ran counter to experience. No prospective merit I might labour to acquire appeared to me of much value, as I stood with this loved picture in my hand, which had so evidently often been, and was now, the solace of my husband's leisure. My heart was too full for me to repress its heavy sighs, or force back the tears that struggled to the surface in spite of my efforts to prevent them. Vain and useless I knew they were; besides, for my own sake, if for no other reason, I must endeavour to maintain a semblance of cheerfulness, even were the reality unattainable. The world would go on the same whether Victor and I were happy or not, and no great event would interpose with magnetic force to draw together those whom the wide chasm of a grave kept asunder.

That fair creature had not injured me; deep affection was her right; her pretty face and loving ways had made her husband happy—they were his due; hers also to be so deeply mourned.

What could I do other than I did? I thought of the few last words uttered by Adams, who was a good woman, and wished to serve me. They came back with an echo of meaning. "He never goes where we cannot find him." No. He is a present help in time

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of trouble. Where else could help be found in difficulties such as mine? I asked to be enabled to accept dutifully my lot, and to dedicate my life to Him. It was a poor offering, and altogether barren of the joy that makes our service pleasing in his eyes; but if he would take it as it was, or rather as, with his help, I might be able to make it, I should be thankful. Tranquillised by my prayer, being deeply in earnest at the time, I rose and went out, choosing a walk in a direction quite opposite to the one the others had taken.

Refreshed by my good resolutions, and by the air which blew softly into my hot eyes and over my aching brow, I went on, almost cheerfully, over the short grass from tree to tree, avoiding all beaten paths, lest by any chance I should meet with some one whom I did not wish to see. Not far had I gone when, missing my handkerchief, I remembered having had it last in Victor's room. To recollect and act were simultaneous. Glad to have so early discovered the loss, I ran back, looking neither to the right nor the left, into the house and up the stairs, through the open door of the dressing-room into the adjoining one, and snatched my handkerchief from the table. Heavy steps approaching startled me even as I grasped it, and in less than a second Victor stood in mute surprise in the doorway.

"I came to fetch my handkerchief," was my foolish answer to his inquiring eyes. Then, remembering this was no explanation of my presence in that chamber, I waited to be further questioned, vexed that the colour so unusual on my pale cheek accused me of some special purpose or indiscretion. A few steps brought him close to me, and his first words were quite different from what I expected to hear.

"If I did but know, Ella, how you wish me to act—" he began, looking at me with a troubled face, in which tenderness and perplexity were mingled together.

"I have no wishes," I answered, shortly. His words seemed almost a mockery, although I knew he spoke them in all sincerity, so far was he from seeing things as I saw them.

"Believe me, Ella, the smallest wish you might express I should have pleasure in gratifying, if it lay in my power."

His soft, dark eyes for a moment met mine, which were fixed, and hard, too, from the effort I made to command myself. Not receiving any immediate response, he turned them away, and glanced at the table where lay the books, the portrait, and the keys.

"I have none in which you can help me," I said, after a pause long enough to give full effect to my words.

Without noticing my ungracious reply, he came nearer, with the same gentle expression as before. My presence there was still unexplained, and must have puzzled him, though he acted as if there were nothing strange in it. Covering the portrait with one hand he took up the keys, saying, "I came up here partly for these, having been obliged to return to the house to give an order I had forgotten."

"And I came to see that," answered I, putting down my finger near to the morocco case. "A foolish curiosity, was it not? But women are made so," said I, assuming an air of indifference, "they cannot help it. Mine is now satisfied, and no one is the worse for it. You may lock it up, that likeness, or keep it there. I do not care to see it any more, nor shall I intrude upon your privacy again."

My tone was hard and hurt him, but it was hard for me to know that that little bit of painted porcelain would always be among his most precious treasures, cherishing remembrances fatal to my happiness.

With Victor standing there looking so sorry for me and speaking so kindly, it was difficult not to envy the wife who had made his life so happy and so sad. If hers had been a short one, it had been filled to overflowing with the best things that come to gladden the human heart. The wilderness to which some have likened this varied pilgrimage here below was full of blossoms and sweetness for her. Its tangled paths had been made smooth, and a tender hand had swept away the thorns and briers which cluster thickly in the way of many others. Heartsick I was, and bitter, too, against a lot which a few minutes before I had prayed to accept meekly. The inconsistency did not strike me then; my better feelings were seared and withered under the baneful influence of envy.

I need not set down, even if I could remember, all that passed in that painful interview. The result of it was that I retained a settled sense of the injury and wrong that had been done to me, and a clearer view of the cold selfishness of those among whom I was thrown. Yet there was at the same time a feeling of self-blame, as I had certainly chosen my own position. For a portionless and dependent girl it might seem that the choice was not one to be wondered at. Few young people can be expected to forecast the dark side of the future. One purpose of a record such as I am now writing is to induce parents and friends to discourage engagements till all the possible elements of happiness or of misery have been plainly presented and well considered.

Whatever my husband might now feel, my own path of duty was clear.

"Tell me your wishes, Ella," he repeated; "if you have none now, tell me them as they arise. If my uncle claims too much of your time—"

"Not at all," I hastily interrupted; "I am very willing to give it him; there is nothing else for me to do," I added, cruelly, for at my first words an expression of disappointment gathered on his face. I walked to the door, he followed, and opened it with a resigned, respectful manner, as if further remonstrance were out of the question, or I were a stranger to whom the politeness was due. Relenting a little, though more on my own account than his, I stopped to say, "One thing you can do, which would be a real gratification to me; you can always strive to believe that whether I indulge or reprove your little ones, I am acting for their good, to the best of my judgment. Adverse influences, as you already know, will not be wanting to suggest the contrary, but in all common sense, I ask, what other motive can I have, when theirs is the only affection within my reach, and even that can only be obtained by time and perseverance? Promise to put that construction upon my actions, and I will promise that your confidence shall not be misplaced."

"I will," he answered, solemnly.

As he did not again open the door, which he had closed quickly when I began to speak, and was still holding, I put his hand away, and opening it myself, passed out, down the staircase, through the hall into the park, walking fast in the direction I had previously taken. Looking back, when a short distance from the house, I saw him striding along after the

nutting party. He had some pleasure in prospect: juvenile voices would be all the merrier at his approach, little feet would run to welcome him, and little caressing hands would be clasping his. Sternly stoical, I went on, still under the trees, stumbling into a trodden path at last, and out of a high wooden gate at the end of it into a green lane, where the dead leaves lay thick and brown, and the grass was tall and coarse. Here I walked swiftly from mere excitement with my undisciplined thoughts, my inward rebellion, and my fitful struggles against them. A small wicket-gate stood open on one side of me, and beyond the path was divided into two, one branching off to the left, a short cut apparently from the high road, which as a white streak wound below to a house whose grey roof was peeping through a group of tall elms.

From this point the green lane was so marked that it must be often trodden, and must lead somewhere in particular. Following it, I came to a spiked iron gate, set in a substantial wall, and looked down upon the sea through its bars. It lay in a glorious rest, and was of a greyish-blue, with only movement enough for the waters to ripple and gleam in silver furrows where the sun's rays sparkled and played. This was the walk the colonel had proposed taking me when I half offended him by going to church instead.

A zigzag path between rocks scattered on the cliff, where the wild grass waved high and a few stunted pines tried to grow, went to the sandy shore. It was rather forlorn. I could understand Colonel Demarcay keeping the gate locked, and only visiting the spot occasionally; still, it had an attraction for me. The seaside spoke of my uncle and took me back to Rosewood. I shook the iron bars in vain; the gate was locked, or I should have gone down instead of climbing a little knoll where the wall was low enough to sit upon, and irregular rocks rose behind it.

Here was grandeur, sublimity, and peace, for the eye wandered over a broad expanse of water, spanned overhead by the pure blue arch, which seems to elevate our thoughts by drawing them towards the mystery that lies beyond; those wondrous depths of water and space ending to the eye where the colours melted into each other, but infinitely vaster and greater than imagination can devise.

Distraction soon came in different ways: in the fishing-boats that plied their trade below, in whiffs of the salt breeze that touched my lips, and in the sea-gulls that skimmed the waves. I heard the gate clang as I watched them, and, looking round, saw Patrick with the key in his hand.

"Do you wish to go down, ma'am?" he asked, approaching me, having already locked the gate after him.

An Old Body's Winter Song.

THE touches of Winter are round us;
He is busy with wind and with rain,
The leaves are all swept from the branches,
The pools are brimful in the lane.
How sombre the noontide! how sullen
The lowlands, where snowflakes fly fast!
How plaintive the notes of the robin!
For Winter has reached us at last.

The touches of Winter are on us;
Our cheeks waning pallid and thin,
Our eyes fading slowly in colour,
Bespeak some sure fading within.
But if mind has grown larger and purer,
Its thoughts and its aims all more clear,
Its perceptions of truth all corrected,
We care not tho' Winter is here.

The touches of Winter are on us;
Our hands are now feeble and slow,
Our feet totter round the small garden—
Are chilly beside the hearth glow.
But if in the long past behind us
Our words and our works have been great
In number and kind, and refreshing,
We welcome our Winter estate.

The touches of Winter are on us;
How dull beats the heart in the breast!
The breath comes and goes in long pauses,
We are fond of our room and our rest.
But if the soul's hope has been garnered,
The will trained to strike passion dumb,
Tho' bruises and blood linger on us,
We are thankful our Winter has come.

The touches of Winter are round us;
And weather yet wilder draws nigh,
Stormy days with their weltering cloud rack,
Frigid nights with no star in the sky.
But if in the world beyond this world
Springs life free from cold or decay,
Oh, Winter, you herald His working
Whose will is as right as His way.

ALFRED NORRIS.

THE STATE OF THE FUNDS.

OF all the topics with which that marvel of modern enterprise, a daily newspaper, has to deal, it may be doubted whether any obtains more attention, or excites more discussion, than the daily price of "Consols." It would, indeed, be simply impossible to exaggerate the importance of the Funds as a factor in the financial life of the nation. The daily quotation of the rise and fall in the price of Consols has been aptly termed the "political barometer;" but it is much more than this, for it registers with equal sensitiveness social changes and political complications, the vicissitudes of domestic life, as well as the more momentous issues of foreign policy. Influenced as the Funds are by the foreign relations of the country, by the condition of the revenue and the money market, by the state of commerce and manufactures, by the prospects of harvests either at home or abroad, by the death of this statesman or the mistake of that, their price represents, at any given time, the net result, so to speak, of all the agencies which have either increased or diminished the capital of the country, or have diverted its direction.

To the historical student the price of Consols

in the past is a guide of the greatest value. In judging of the merits of this policy or that measure, it is often very difficult to arrive at the truth amid the prejudices of excited party feeling, and then great help may be obtained from an observation of the effect which such a policy had upon the Funds, for though the variations in the price of Consols may really not have been justified by the event, though they have often indicated mere panic, still, on the whole, they accurately represent the public opinion current at the time, however foolish that public opinion may be. Consols may be, as Sydney Smith once said, "the greatest fools in Europe;" they are, at least, *truthful* fools.

With the view of presenting, in a succinct and portable form, the salient features of the history of the English Funds, we append a Chart of Consols,* copied, by permission, from the larger and more elaborate chart prepared by Mr. Bernard Cracroft. A careful examination will show that it gives the highest and lowest price of Consols, and the growth or decline of the National Funded Debt yearly, from the French Revolution of 1783 to the year 1874, while the references which follow link the variations in price with the political or social transactions which occasioned them. The chart will, we believe, prove equally useful to the man of business and to the student of history.

It would be obviously impossible to enter at any length into the history of the National Debt, fascinating as that subject undoubtedly is. But one or two of the more obvious features of the debt may be hinted at. War has always been the parent of debt. The story of the rapid and resistless growth of the debt is, politically, a history of war; financially, of swollen expenditure, deficient revenue, and wasteful loans. And as the debt grew, patriots lamented and statesmen discussed. As million was added to million, prophets declared that the country would be ruined, while financiers busied themselves with schemes for the reduction of the interest or the repayment of the principal. The vaticinations of the former were at least harmless; the proposals of the others were, as we shall show, highly pernicious. Curiously enough, however, the country did not succumb. On the contrary, with every fresh accumulation of debt, fresh resources seemed to be developed and renewed confidence to be exhibited, until the country bore with ease a burden which a few years before had been declared intolerable. It thus happens that notwithstanding the growth of the debt to upwards of 800 millions, Consols have on the whole steadily advanced in price.

And now a word or two as to the Funding system. The possessor of £100 Consols is really the owner of a perpetual annuity of three pounds. His title to this annuity he can sell at its market value, but he cannot demand payment of the principal sum on which the interest of three pounds is calculated. On the other hand, the nation cannot reduce the annuity—that is, alter the specified rate of interest—without offering to the creditor the full value of his share in the debt. The distinction between Funded and the

Unfunded Debt, then, is simply this: that in the latter, Government contracts to repay both principal and interest; in the former, interest only is provided for. Now it is worthy of note that the adoption of this latter system—the non-payment of the principal—was not the result of any specific policy, but grew gradually out of the exigencies of the State. At present, as everybody knows, the revenue of the nation, from whatever source derived, forms one fund in the Exchequer, called the Consolidated Fund. All claims on the Government are paid out of this fund in a certain defined order. Formerly, however, this was not the case. In William the Third's reign the sum realised by each tax formed a separate and distinct fund, chargeable with its own peculiar liability. It was of course intended that no tax should be mortgaged for a larger sum than could be repaid, both principal and interest, thereout. But the Exchequer was soon utterly unable to meet the demands upon it. Then the taxes were consolidated, so as to make the surplus of one available for the deficiency of another, and out of the fund thus formed, the interest was first to be paid, and then the principal, "if there be any surplus." As, however, the embarrassments of Government became more urgent, the impossibility of raising revenue sufficient for both principal and interest became manifest. Gradually, but surely, the character of the debt changed, and the idea of repaying the principal was lost sight of. The State, in fact, ceased to borrow under a bond of repayment, but, in reality, sold the public creditor a perpetual annuity.

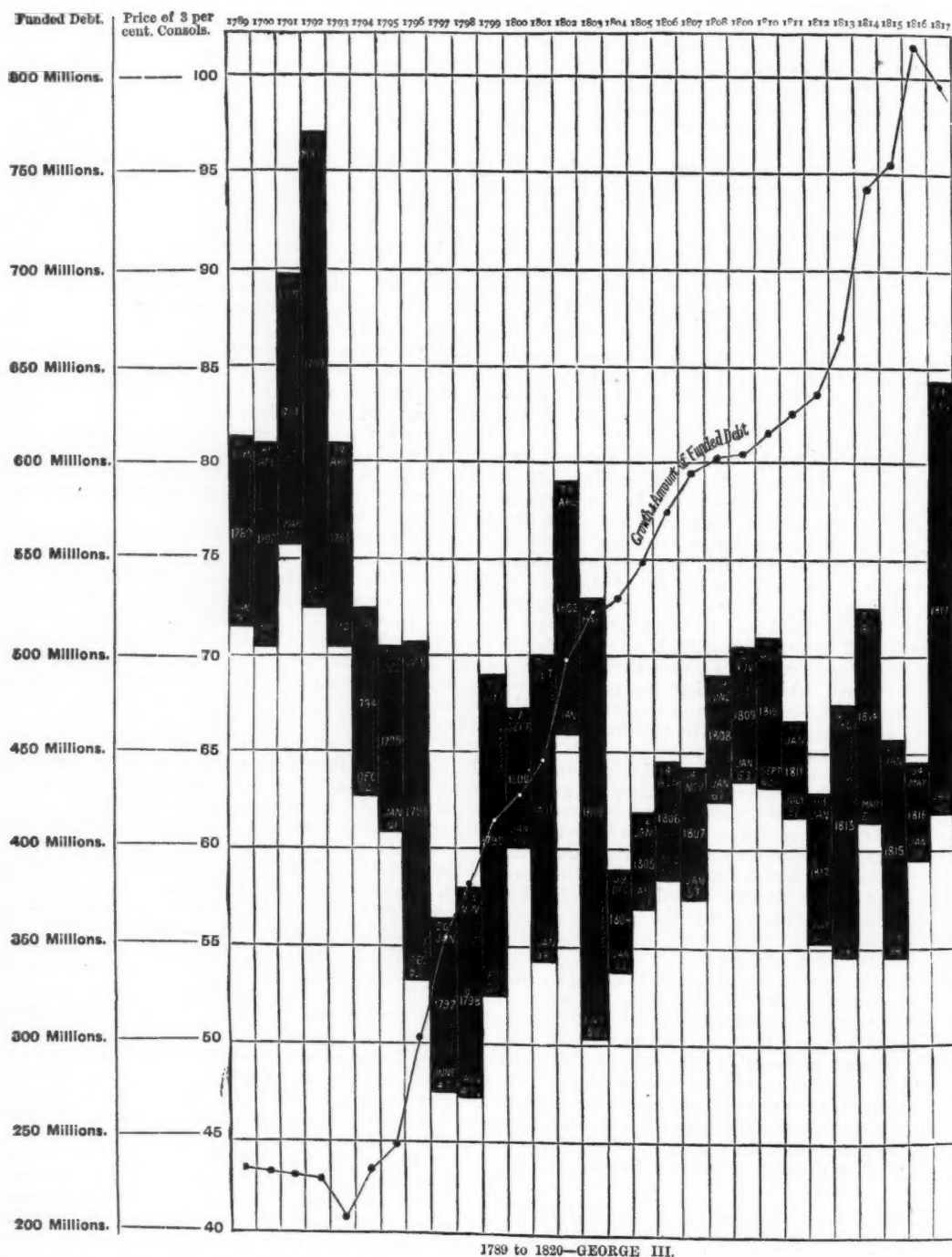
Turning now to the total of the debt, indicated in our chart, as the reader will observe, by the dots connected by a thin line extending across the sheet, we will, in a word, draw attention to the two gigantic errors by which the total has been so enormously swollen. The first of these was the practice of funding at a low rate of interest on a nominal capital; secondly, the establishment of a Sinking Fund of a delusive nature. To illustrate the former, let us suppose the Government borrowed in a three per cent. stock when the market rate was four and a half per cent., they gave the lender £150 three per cent. stock for every £100 advanced. In other words, they bound the country to pay £4 10s. a year for ever for the £100 lent; or, should it be wished to pay off the debt, to liquidate it by the payment of £150—that is, half as much again as was originally lent. In consequence of this system, it results that the net value actually received into the Exchequer for 740½ millions capital of debt, was only 510½ millions. To put the matter in the simplest form—for every £100 stock of the Funded Debt, the country has received, on the average, only £68 18s. 7d. in money.

The fundamental error of Pitt's Sinking Fund consisted in this—that money was systematically applied to the reduction of debt, from 1786 to 1829, when the revenue was deficient. It followed that this money so applied had to be borrowed, and actually was borrowed, at a higher rate of interest than that borne by the debt paid off.

On the whole, however, the taxpayer of to-day may contemplate the National Debt even with complacency when he recalls most features of its history. For the story of our debt is the story of great national perils encountered with courage and overcome with honour. Above all, since the Revolution, the annals of the National Debt are unstained by repudiation in any shape.

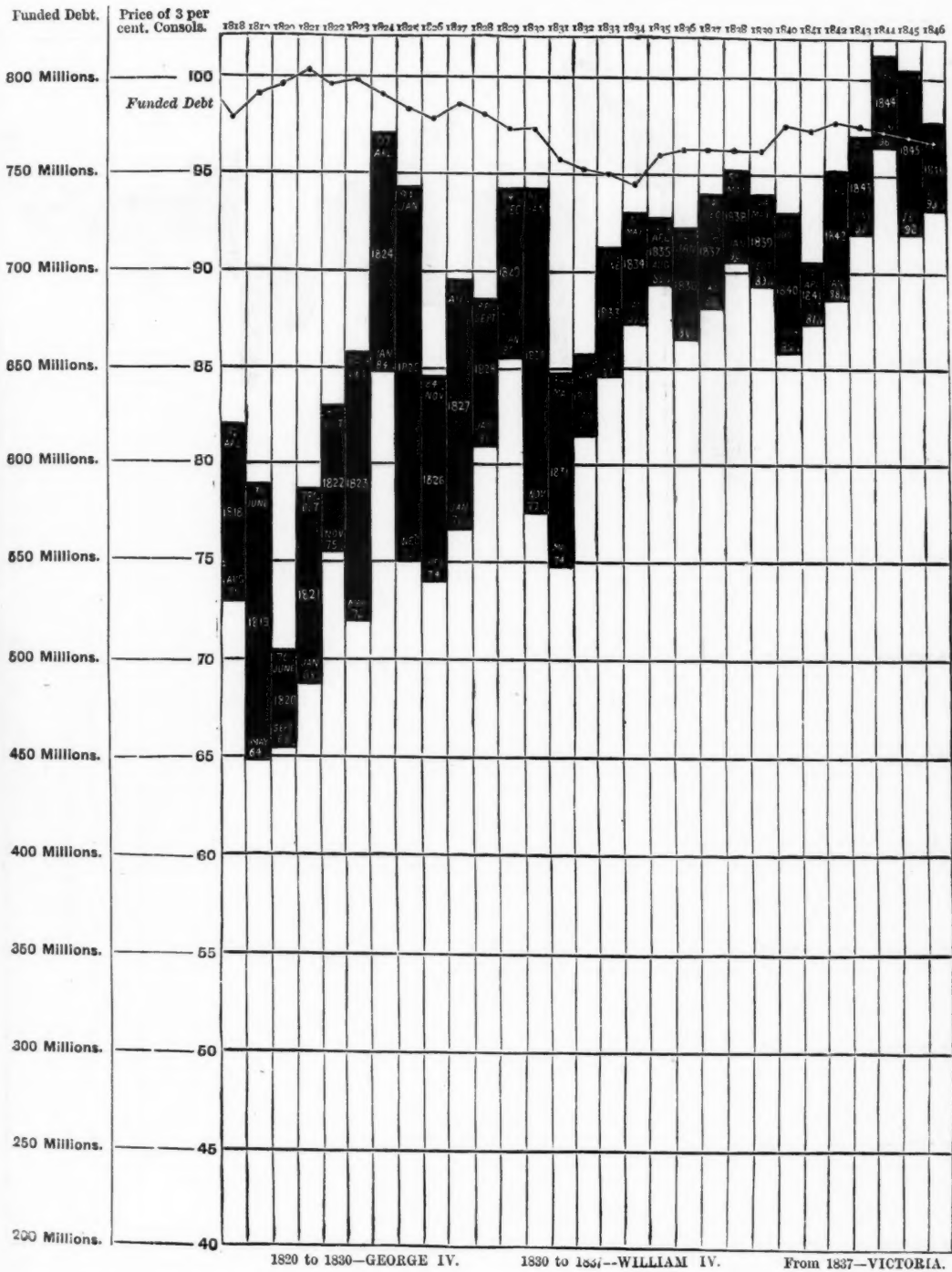
* Cracroft's "Consols" Chart, showing the highest and lowest prices of Consols, and the yearly average of Bank Rate, etc. Published by Edward Stanford, Charing Cross. Mr. Cracroft has also issued tabular statements of the French, Italian, and Spanish Funds. It is some testimony to the value of such labours that his Chart of the Honduras, San Domingo, Costa Rica, Paraguayan, and Bolivian Loans, published as a supplement to his "Weekly List," was called in evidence by the Foreign Loans Committee of the House of Commons, and is reproduced by them in the Blue Book.

CHART, SHOWING THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRICES OF CONSOLS,
and the Growth and Decline of the National Funded Debt of Great Britain, year by year, from the year
of the Great French Revolution to the present time.



N.B. Each black section represents the extreme fluctuations of 3 per cent. Consols for the year marked in the centre of the column: the figures at the top and bottom of the column give the Highest and Lowest quotations per £100 for that year,

CHART, SHOWING THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRICES OF CONSOLS,
and the Growth and Decline of the National Funded Debt of Great Britain, year by year, from the year
of the Great French Revolution to the present time.

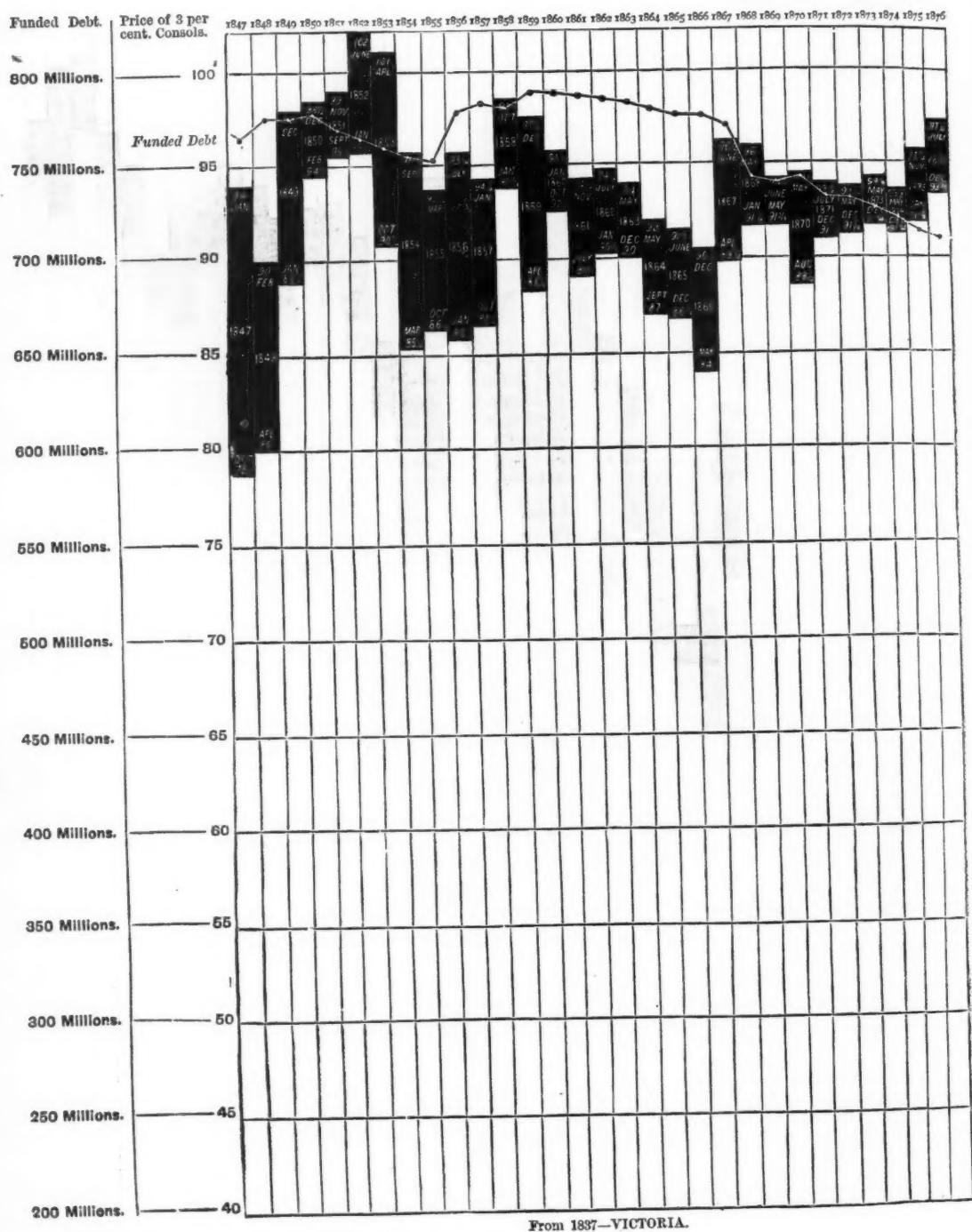


and the months in which those figures were touched. The dots connected by thin lines represent the growth and decline of the Funded Debt from 1789 to 1876. Each dot is opposite the gross amount at the side and under the year.

[Continued on next page.]

THE STATE OF THE FUNDS.

CHART, SHOWING THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST PRICES OF CONSOLS,
and the Growth and Decline of the National Funded Debt of Great Britain, year by year, from the year
of the Great French Revolution to the present time.



From 1837—VICTORIA.

From 1731 to the Rebellion of 1745, Consols were never below 89. In 1737, they were once as high as 107, but during the Rebellion they receded to 76; twelve years after (*i.e.*, 1749) the price recovered to about 100. Between the Peace of Paris (1763) and the breaking out of the American War, the price varied between 80 and 90, and towards the close of that War they fell to 54. In 1789, the year of the French Revolution, the variation for the year was $9\frac{3}{4}$, between $71\frac{1}{2}$, the lowest point touched in January, to $81\frac{1}{2}$, the highest in September. The Funded Debt at the commencement of 1789 was £236,191,315. For the following chronological table, we are also indebted to Mr. Cracroft:—

1789. FRENCH REVOLUTION.
1790. WAR IN INDIA (with Tippoo Sahib): Peace with Spain.
1791. Peace in India.
1792. REVOLUTION IN PARIS: Louis XVI. Imprisoned: ALL AMBASSADORS LEFT FRANCE: France Declares War against Austria: First Coalition against France (Austria, Holland, and Prussia).
1793. Louis XVI. Beheaded: France at War with England, Holland, Spain, Russia, Sweden, and part of Germany: Toulon Evacuated by the British.
1794. Habeas Corpus Act Suspended: Victory of Lord Howe over the French Fleet.
1795. Treaty of Defensive Alliance between England and Russia: Defeat of French Fleet by Lord Bridport.
1796. War with Spain Declared: Napoleon Bonaparte's Italian Victories: Surrender of Dutch Fleet to British.
1797. COMMERCIAL PANIC: BANK OF ENGLAND RESTRICTED FROM PAYMENT IN CASH: Issue of One Pound Notes: Mutiny of Fleet at Nore and Spithead: Defeat of Dutch at Camperdown: Defeat of Spanish Fleet off Cape St. Vincent: Bonaparte returns to Paris: Expected Invasion of French.
1798. Confiscation of British Property in France: Habeas Corpus Act again Suspended: Rebellion in Ireland: BATTLE OF THE NILE.
1799. Income Tax First Created (5 per cent.): Second Coalition against France: England, Russia, Germany, Turkey, Portugal, and Naples: Bonaparte Elected Consul: Fall of Seringapatam: Surrender of Dutch Fleet at Texel: French Directory Dissolved.
1800. Confederation of Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark against Great Britain: Battle of Marengo.
1801. Differences between Great Britain and Northern Powers Arranged: Battle of Copenhagen: Preliminaries of Peace with France (Consols rose from $59\frac{3}{4}$ to 70): Union of Great Britain and Ireland: Habeas Corpus Act again Suspended.
1802. TREATY OF AMIENS (Consols rose from 70 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 79).
1803. HOSTILITIES WITH FRANCE RECOMMENCED: French take possession of Hanover (in May, Consols fluctuated $16\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.): Acquisition of Indian Possessions: Mahratta War.
1804. Bonaparte Declared Emperor of the French: War with Spain.
1805. Third Coalition against France (England, Austria, Russia, and Naples): Battles of TRAFALGAR, Austerlitz: Income Tax raised to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
1806. Prussians Seize Hanover: Battle of Jena: Death of Mr. Pitt: Income Tax raised to 10 per cent. (and so continued till 1816): Fourth Coalition against France (England, Prussia, Russia, and Saxony): Slave Trade Abolished.
1807. PEACE OF TILSIT (France and Russia): The Berlin Decrees: War with Russia.
1808. Austrian and Prussian Ambassadors Leave England: Peninsular Campaign Commenced.
1809. Fifth Coalition against France (Austria and England): Napoleon Enters Vienna: WALCHEREN EXPEDITION: Negotiations with America broken off: Battle of Corunna.
1810. GREAT COMMERCIAL DISTRESS IN LONDON: War with Spain: Rambouillet Decree of Bonaparte against America: Incorporation of Holland with France: Agitation for Repeal of Irish Union.
1811. Regency Commenced: Non-Intercourse Act of America.
1812. WAR WITH AMERICA COMMENCED: French Retreat from Moscow: Peninsular Campaign: Battle of Salamanca: Americans Invade Canada.
1813. Battles of Vittoria and Pyrenees: Wellington Enters France: Sixth Coalition against France (Russia and Prussia): Battle of Leipsic.
1814. Peace of Kiel with Sweden and Denmark: ALLIED INVASION OF FRANCE: ALLIED ARMIES ENTER PARIS: Bourbon Dynasty Restored: Bonaparte Exiled to Elba: PARIS TREATY OF PEACE: Peace of Ghent with America.
1815. Bonaparte's Escape from Elba: BATTLE OF WATERLOO (Consols rose from 54 to $59\frac{1}{2}$): Second GENERAL TREATY OF PEACE Signed at Paris.
1816. Income Tax Act Repealed.
1817. Bank of England Partially Resumes Cash Payments.
1819. Reform Agitation: Appropriation of £12,000,000 of Sinking Fund to bring State Income equal to Expenditure: Bank of England Demands Payment of Government Debt of £10,000,000: Death of Bonaparte.
1820. Twenty Banks Stop Payment in Ireland.
1821. Bank of England Wholly Resumes Cash Payments.
1823. Invasion of Spain by France.
1824. Burmese War.
1825. GREAT COMMERCIAL DISTRESS AND PANIC (70 Banks Stopped, Winter 1825-6).
1826. Apprehensions of Hostilities with France: English Force sent to Lisbon: Restrictions on Bank Charter.
1827. Battle of Navarino.
1828. War between Russia and Turkey: Departure of British from Portugal.
1829. Political Panic in London: Riots.
1830. FRENCH REVOLUTION (Louis Philippe Called to the Throne of France).
1831. Ministers Defeated on Reform Bill: Dispute with France respecting Belgian and Dutch War.
1832. Reform Act Passed: Commercial Panic in America.
1833. Slavery Abolished (Compensation to Owners, £20,000,000).
1834. Three Changes of Ministry.
1836. Spanish Civil War.
1837. Accession of Queen Victoria: Rebellion in Canada.
1838. Chartist Agitations: Commencement of Afghan War: Canadian Rebellion Suppressed.
1839. War with China: United States Bank Suspends Payment.
1840. Misunderstanding with France: Treaty of London for Settlement of Eastern Question.
1841. Anti-Corn-Law Meetings.
1842. Income Tax Act Passed: Treaty of Nankin (Peace with China): Distress in Manufacturing Districts.
1844. BANK OF ENGLAND CHARTER PASSED: Misunderstanding with France respecting Tahiti.
1845. Sikh War: Anti-Corn-Law Agitations: Railway Mania.
1846. COMMERCIAL AND RAILWAY PANIC: Repeal of Corn Laws: Defeat of the Sikhs by Sir H. Gough.
1847. GREAT COMMERCIAL DISTRESS: Destitution in Ireland through Failure of Potato Crop: French Invasion Mania.

1848. FRENCH REVOLUTION (Louis Napoleon President of French Republic): Chartist Demonstrations: Habeas Corpus Act Suspended in Ireland.
 1849. Disturbances in Canada.
 1851. COUP D'ETAT OF LOUIS NAPOLEON (December).
 1852. Consols at highest Point: Money very Abundant.
 1853. Gladstone Budget: Proposal to reduce Interest from 3 to 2½ per cent. rejected.
 1854. Commencement of RUSSIAN WAR (during March, Consols fluctuated from 91½ to 85½): Battles of Alma, Balaclava, Inkermann.
 1855. Resignation of Aberdeen, and Formation of Palmerston Ministry: Fall of Sebastopol.
 1856. PARIS TREATY OF PEACE WITH RUSSIA (Consols rose from 87½ to 90½): Misunderstanding with America: Wars with Persia and China.
 1857. INDIAN MUTINY: Chinese War: COMMERCIAL PANIC (Relieved by Suspension of Bank Charter Act).
 1859. Italian War (France and Italy against Austria): PANIC (on apprehension of General European War).
 1860. Commercial Treaty with France: Peace with China.
 1861. Commencement of CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA: Misunderstanding with America (Trent Affair): Post Office Savings Banks Opened throughout Great Britain.
 1862. GREAT DISTRESS in Cotton Manufacturing Districts: PANIC: Alabama Depredations.
 1863. Rupture with Brazil: Battle of Gettysburg.
 1864. Prussian and Austrian Campaign against Denmark.
 1865. Close of American War.
 1866. Commercial and Joint Stock Company PANIC: Fenian Agitation: SIX WEEKS' WAR (Austria against Prussia and Italy).
 1867. New Reform Bill Passed: Fenian Outrages.
 1868. Abyssinian Expedition: Spanish Revolution.
 1869. Irish Church Bill: Distress in Lancashire.
 1870. FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR: PANICS: New Treaty for Belgian Neutrality: Russian Repudiation of Paris Treaty: Irish Land Bill.
 1871. Termination of Franco-Prussian War: Communist Insurrection in Paris: Payment of French Indemnity commenced: Activity and Prosperity in Trade.
 1872. Settlement of the "Indirect Claims:" Absorption of Gold by Germany: Further Payment of French Indemnity: Prevalence of Strikes.

AMOUNT OF INTEREST PAID ON TOTAL NATIONAL DEBT.

From 1691 to 1790... ..£346,161,039	From 1811 to 1820..... 303,639,929	From 1841 to 1850..... 285,099,761
" 1791 " 1800... .. 135,123,780	" 1821 " 1830..... 294,437,684	" 1851 " 1860..... 280,665,379
" 1801 " 1810..... 224,138,726	" 1831 " 1840..... 290,254,607	" 1861 " 1870..... 263,745,172
		Total £2,423,266,077

THE GREAT SMITH FAMILY: LINEAL AND COLLATERAL.

III.

IN superstitious times, beings of the dimly described ages of our infant world were fabled to perform wonders and feats which made our fathers suppose that the gods had come down to them in the likeness of men. Thus there is the old story of Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven in order to animate his handiwork on earth, and was punished for it—a hint of the efforts of genius in every age; and we have already spoken of Vulcan—also known by his other name of Mulciber, as Milton sings:—

"Nor was his name unheard nor unadored
 In ancient Greece; and in Ausonia's land
 Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
 From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
 Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day; and with the setting sun
 Dropped from the zenith, like a falling star,
 On Lemnos, the Ægean Isle."

The workshop of Mulciber, or Vulcan, was supposed to be under Mount Etna, and there, assisted by the Cyclops, he forged thunderbolts for Jupiter and arms for heroes.

But all these old or fabulous achievements have been quite cast into insignificance by those of the blacksmiths and iron-masters of our own day. This is indeed the age of iron, and the gold which has flowed in streams through our highways of commerce has only been poured from the transforming wizardry of the great iron kings. Dr. Smiles's very interesting

"Industrial Biography," too exclusively asserts this; for industry has many varieties of effort and many noble chapters, although it must be admitted, perhaps, that the smith has in a very singular manner contributed to the wealth of the nation. Many circumstances have aided, especially these two,—the discovery and the application of the power of steam, and the planting of the great smelting furnaces in the neighbourhood of the coal-fields. It seems wonderful now that they should have been worked anywhere else; wonderful to think that those great furnaces, three hundred years since, and further back, existed in the woodland scenery of our country, and were worked entirely by charcoal. At that time the making of every ton of pig-iron required four loads of timber converted into charcoal fuel, and the making every ton of bar-iron required three loads more. It is only within about the last hundred years that the mightiest achievements of the Smith family have been performed. It is singular to think that almost until the beginning of the present century the human hand, alone and unaided, wrought out all that was wrought, performed all that was performed. What a difference came over the scene of labour when man summoned steam to his aid!

In our lightly sketched papers we cannot recite the history of iron and fire even in our own times, nor mention all the names of those who have brought their separate pieces of improvement and skill to bear upon the labours of the furnace and the forge;

but there are two or three who must not pass unmentioned. That great firm of Maudesley and Field!—what a story it tells in its origin and progress. Henry Maudesley was a working smith in the arsenal at Woolwich. Bramah, one of the great iron kings of his day, heard of his ability, and asked him to enter his service, at the same time calling upon him to give some proof of his proficiency. Maudesley was then only a lad of eighteen years of age; he pointed to an old worn-out vice in the workshop, and asked whether if he renewed that in the course of the afternoon it would be considered a proof of his power. The test was accepted; he set to work, and in the course of the afternoon, and before the time appointed, the worthless thing was turned out of his hands as good as new, and, of course, he stepped into a first-rate position in the shop. He invented shortly the ingenious instrument which is known as the slide-rest, which diminished labour, and substituted for a fixed tool one guided by the human hand, and which prevented all possibility of inaccuracy, and gave to the work of the smith the precision of a mathematical demonstration. Maudesley was a wonderful man; from a hint barely communicated to him he could create a machine. Brunel, the great engineer, in the early stage of his history, was talking with him, but, with all that fear which inventors have of disclosing their designs prematurely to others lest they should make some drawing and rob them of their invention, Brunel was surprised to hear young Maudesley say, "Ah! I see what you are thinking of. You want machinery for making ships' blocks!" The work was done, and Dr. Wynter says, "these were the first labour-saving works set up in our public establishments, evidencing the enormous amount of productive power the country had acquired." Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, seems a curious place for a smith's shop, but it was there that Henry Maudesley first established himself. There Mr. Field joined him, and it has been said, with great truth, that "the shop of Maudesley and Field gave a stamp to the men who worked in it, just as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge give an impress to their respective students—an impress which never leaves them." Dr. Smiles says of Henry Maudesley that "he was more than a smith, he was a great artist; and what Quentin Matsys—to whom we shall presently refer—was in ornamental ironwork, that he was in practical machine work, and he left the stamp of the artist on every bit of work he did."

But there was one in the shop of Maudesley who was to achieve more than his master. James Nasmyth was and is the Thor of this great iron age, for he invented the great steam-hammer, a tool without which modern forging could not be accomplished; and who that has ever seen the mighty giant at its work can fail to feel the wonder and marvel at once of the gentleness and the majesty with which it may be made to perform its labours? As has been the case with so many other products of English genius, the invention was stolen abroad, and in operation there before it was applied at home. When the Great Britain steamship was being constructed, it was first intended that she should have paddle engines; the paddle-shaft was of such enormous proportions that no forge in the kingdom was found equal to the turning it out. In this dilemma Mr. Brunel applied to Mr. Nasmyth to aid him with his advice. Mr. Nasmyth's reply was a sketch made on the spur of the moment and returned

by post that same night. Unfortunately it was determined to change the paddle for the screw; the paddle-shaft therefore was not required, and the great steam-hammer remained only a dream upon paper. Not long after, Mr. Nasmyth was visiting a foundry in France, and was there shown an enormous piece of forged work. Curious to know how it had been accomplished, he asked the question of the inspector of the works. "Why, with your steam-hammer, to be sure!" was the instant reply. The Frenchman had been shown the drawing by Nasmyth's partner at the time it was made, and with a keener appreciation than English machinists had of its importance, he instantly erected and set up one. It is now, however, everywhere in use, and few instruments have tended more to the development and increase of the size of our forgings; without it there could have been none of those enormous ironworks which have characterised our industry in this department during the last twenty years, and it has literally raised the worker in iron from a comparative dwarf to a giant indeed.

This James Nasmyth reminds us of some of those great artists of the Middle Ages—Leonardo di Vinci or Michael Angelo; for while he has immortalised his name in his own peculiar department of labour as a smith, he has shown himself to be equal to excellence in very different departments of intellectual labour, especially as a painter. When he retired from business he fell back, for the purpose of recreation, upon pursuits which had distinguished him when a lad; and when an exhibition of works of art, by amateurs and others, was held in Pall Mall for the relief of the Lancashire distress, several of his architectural and landscape paintings created no little surprise, especially the picture of the City of St. Anne's, the Fairies, and Everybody for Ever. They showed at once not only power of imagination, but rare felicity in execution. Nor this alone; his astronomical discoveries brought forth at the British Association an eloquent eulogy and lucid exposition from the patriarch philosopher of our age, Sir John Herschel. The "Edinburgh Review" spoke of him as "a philosopher as profound as he is expert." Dr. Smiles, to whose "Industrial Biography" we have been indebted for many of these particulars, mentions two anecdotes connected with the ancestry of Nasmyth too characteristic to omit. The first, as to the origin of the family name: the founder of the family is said to have been engaged in one of those Border feuds which raged between the Scotch kings and the Earls of Douglas. One of the adherents of the king took refuge—his party being worsted in the conflict—in a village smithy; there hastily disguising himself, and putting on a leathern apron, he pretended to be engaged in work, when some of the Douglas followers rushed in; glancing at the pretended workman, and seeing that he prosecuted his task so blunderingly that the hammer-shaft broke in his hand, one of them exclaimed, "Ye're nae smyth!" Such is said to be the origin of the family name—a name, assuredly, which their illustrious descendant does not deserve. We may be permitted, perhaps, to demur to the probabilities of the story. Nasmyth, in the old times, was *nail smith*, and we would rather prefer to think that, probably in some far-off age, some founder of the family was as expert in this humbler department of iron labour as his great descendant in wielding the hammer over huge iron plates and bars. The varied excellence and eminence

of James Nasmyth, to which we have referred, calls up another reminiscence. Two hundred years since, Jean Nasmyth, of Hamilton, an ancestor of the family, was burned for a witch. She was one of the last martyrs of that monstrous superstition, and the poor old lady's crime was a very slight one; she read the Bible with two pairs of spectacles. Assuredly, had her descendant lived then, and manifested any of those proclivities of genius which have given to him his fame, he would have been doomed for a sorcerer. His exploits in practice have been exactly those which, only indulged in speculation, doomed Roger Bacon for twelve years to the dungeon. The poor old lady with her two pairs of spectacles found her way to the flames; James Nasmyth with his two telescopes, by which he brought the sun and moon so near to him as to be able with a considerable degree of certainty to describe their substance and paint their scenery, won for himself the admiration and eulogies of the masters of science; but those two telescopes might have put him into a bad case two hundred years since!

Another of these master smiths, but of an earlier period than Nasmyth, who also worked in the shop of Maudeley and Field, was Joseph Clements. Of him it has been said that he constructed such machinery that "he made iron think." If our readers have been into a great smith's shop, they have seen, most probably, a beautiful tool, cutting a long narrow ribbon of iron with its keen tooth. This is work which is usually superintended only by a lad; it superseded the old rugged method of chipping and filing. This was the invention of Joseph Clements—a marvellous stride of simplicity, accuracy, and beauty in almost all departments of iron work. The mathematical accuracy of Clements was so great that Professor Babbage sought him out to construct his famous Calculating Machine, an apparatus intended to calculate with unerring accuracy, acting so perfectly, that when, through any cause, an error has been made, the machine actually reverses itself, and, to use Dr. Smiles's expression, "rubs itself out." The machine was never finished in England; it was reserved for Sweden to produce it. Messrs. Scheutz, of Stockholm, completed this extraordinary combination of what has been called "thinking iron," from the drawings of Babbage and Clements, and it was first displayed at the Paris Exhibition of 1855. Surely the instances of these thoughtful men, surrounding a province of labour which has usually been regarded as the most rugged and almost thoughtless, with such moral significance and material sublimity, raises within the mind feelings of reverence for the powers of labour when associated with designing and calculating will.

AMERICANISMS.

THE common weeds of English farms have crossed the Atlantic, and abound in the cultivated land of the Northern United States; and the happy chirp of the English house-sparrow is familiar in American cities. Equally complete is the settlement which the English tongue has effected, so that people whose surnames betray all sorts of original nationalities now speak it with more purity than the majority of the people of England itself. The locomotive habits of Americans, and their universal habit of reading the

newspaper, have saved them from provincialisms. Yet there are moderate peculiarities of diction in particular States, and over the country at large words and idioms are used which are unknown, or at least are differently understood, in Great Britain. These constitute the list of "Americanisms," to which new additions are being made from time to time.

On our arrival by sea at New York, we find ourselves face to face with these expressions. People are everywhere "guessing" and "calculating" without the slightest perception that there is anything odd in the phraseology. We look after our luggage and find that it has all become "baggage." An "express-man" is introduced to us, answering to the parcel-conveying agent of Britain, and, after taking down our address, he hands us a brass "check" for each piece of baggage, fastening the counterpart of the check on the articles themselves. We ask the way to the railway terminus, and are informed that if we pass so many "blocks" we shall be at the "railroad depôt;" or, still better, if we get into the "street cars," which we find to be genuine tramway carriages—the word "tramway" seems to be unknown in America—we shall be at the depôt "right away" (*i.e.*, immediately).

Having purchased our ticket, we are introduced to an American "railroad car," with its two long rows of cushioned seats, its comfortable stove, its iced water, its other conveniences, and its hundred or more of passengers, white and "coloured" ("black" is not applied to "the human face divine"), rich and poor; some of them, as we find out, being "dead heads" (*i.e.*, having free passes on the train). We soon see evidence of the nautical expressions which have fixed themselves on American travelling. "All aboard for Philadelphia" is the warning that the train is soon to start; the snorting of the locomotive's steam-horn makes our child exclaim that it is the big ship's fog-horn, to which his ears were accustomed on the voyage. "Freight train" appears in large letters as the designation of what the English call a "goods train;" and after we have started, the "conductor" (representing the English guard) comes through the car, examining and nipping the tickets, and collecting some of them, and we hear him addressed as "captain," just as the chief magistrate of the ocean steamer was addressed. The locomotive has on its front a "cow-catcher," which often saves the lives of errant quadrupeds, and protects itself from getting "off the track." This little hamlet which we pass without stopping is marked as a "flag station." Thus we come to learn that "station" means an intermediate stopping-place; depôt, a chief stopping-place, or a terminus; and flag station signifies that it is only by notice or signal that passengers are put down or taken up at certain places.

Arrived at our destination, we write to advise friends of our safety, and on proceeding to the post-office we find that we are to ask, not for postage stamps, but for postage "labels," and that we do not "post," but "mail" our epistle. Next we proceed to a "store" (as the shops are called, the term "shop" being confined to a workshop), and on asking the price of an article, are informed that "it is worth"—thus the storekeeper puts the matter—so many "dollars" or so many "cents." Perhaps we are informed that it is worth so many "shillings" and so many "pence," and although surprised at the exorbitant price asked, we proceed to pay the money, whereupon we find that it costs only half what we had

set upon it, that the pence are cents, and the shillings each of them twelve cents, or sixpence English.

Our maid, who has accompanied us from the old country, is somewhat put out by the novelty of terms. Even the pot she must call "oval," the small jugs are all "pitchers;" she asks in a store for a "stone of flour," and the storekeeper, who had never heard of a stone as a measure of weight, inquired if it was a stone for the floor she wanted. A hundredweight means 100 lbs. weight. She wants black-lead, and she and the storekeeper have a difficulty in discovering that "stove-polish" is the article in quest. Goloshes are unknown, but "overshoes" and "arctics" abound to protect the feet in cold weather.

The sign-boards are instructive. One of them represents the establishment as a "dry goods store," the name for haberdashery; another bears the whimsical legend, "notions," representing small-wares of various kinds. Our maid herself has ceased to be a "servant," and we, who are king and queen of our domestic castle, are no more "master" and "missus." The free air of the country in which all are "citizens" and no "subjects" has raised the servant to be a "help," and her employer to be "governor" or "boss," or if slang is to be avoided, "Mr. A." or "Mrs. A." A "biscuit" is a soft bun, and a hard English biscuit is called a "cracker." Notes representing a number of dollars are called "bills;" small notes of ten or twenty-five or fifty cents are "greenbacks" or "change." "Potatoes" are either "sweet potatoes" or "Irish potatoes" (also termed "white potatoes"). "Lumber" signifies timber or sawed boards. "Deal" is unknown as a specification of a kind of wood, but the wood itself is abundant, and is called "white pine." "Vine" is used generically for any climbing plant, and the common phraseology runs of "grape vine," "ivy vine," and again of "poison ivy."

English terms of natural history are misapplied in a country where the species vary from those of Great Britain. The American "robin" is a large, red-breasted thrush; the "haw" is a kind of plum-tree; "daisy" is not the sweet, crimson-tipped flower of home.

"Clever" does not indicate mental ability (which is expressed by "able" or "smart"), but means generosity of spirit.

The accent and tone of words is sometimes peculiar. Mam'ma and pap'a, with accent on the first syllable, are universal; and we give testimony with long o, not testimony as in Europe.

We are soon warned to avoid certain forms of diction. An American lady is never "homely," just as an English lady is not "plain," or an Irish lady "ordinary," these terms being all euphuistic for "ugly." The pillars of the human frame are "limbs," to the exclusion of the shorter word (though I never saw trousers on the legs of a piano). This prudishness is set off by a few expressions not recognised in English society. All sorts of flies are termed "bugs," the firefly being the "lightning bug"; and so of May bugs, and other bugs of attractive and not repulsive kind.

The peculiarities of expression may be traced to various sources. The American Indians have left their mark extensively in geographical names, and also in a few words which persist in the language of the country: as "hominny," for food prepared from Indian corn. Some of their words, as canoe, cal-

umet, wigwam, tomahawk, and pemmican, are becoming classical English terms. "Maize" originated in the West Indies; "cob," expressing its head deprived of the seeds, and "shuck" for its husks, are probably Indian words, as is the widely-known "tobacco." "Guano" is Peruvian for "dung." "Corn" is employed in the United States for Indian corn. "Porridge," made of oatmeal, is called "mush," or "oatmeal mush," or simply "oatmeal" (and is partaken of, sup by sup, along with coffee or beefsteak, as is cheese with apple-tart or other sweets). "Supper" means the English "tea," saving that *tea* is rarely used at it, coffee being the national beverage. "Cookey" (a Christmas cake), "dough nuts" (balls of sweetened dough, fried), "bush" (land covered with rank shrubbery), and "boss" (employer or overseer), are of Dutch parentage. "Prairie" is French; and quite a large number are Spanish, as mulatto, quadroon, creole, filibuster, savannah, stampede. Germans, negroes, and Chinese have also made their mark in the popular vocabulary.

The history and circumstances of the country are responsible for many significant expressions. A "stump orator" is one who made his speeches with the stumps of felled trees as his rostrums. A "bee" is a party of friendly neighbours come to help a man in some piece of work; building-bees and quilting-bees, and now spelling-bees, illustrate the use and modification of the term. "Buncombe," as hypocritical enthusiasm in speechifying, came from a place which one of these orators represented; "spread-eagleism" is proclaiming how America beats the world; "high falutin" is a bombastic style of language. (None of these articles are in favour, as we are glad to observe.) "Bogus" means deception, after the name of one who was able at counterfeiting. "Shoddy" came from England; it means *shreddy*, as made up of rotten shreds, and was applied to bad clothing furnished by Government contractors.

Some of the Americanisms savour of slang; thus, to "run" a concern or to run a church, is to manage its finances; and if the affair "comes to grief," as the English say, "Brother Jonathan" remarks that it "has gone up a spout;" if it is only in difficulties, then he says "it is gone up a tree" (like an opossum when hunted). The "hub," or nose of a cart-wheel, means the centre of refinement, and having been applied to Boston by one of its own citizens, the name stuck. Skedaddle is a Scotch (or Greek) term Americanised, and is retained because of its odd sound. "Scallawag" is a very pithy designation for one who is a loafer and scamp combined. The English "chimney-pot" hats are not so known in the United States, but are called "stove-pipe hats." "He's a goner" signifies that he is ruined in fortune and health; and "he's played out" indicates that he is without resource, that his last card had been played and failed. "Nine cheers and a tiger" is a call for the applause to be backed by such a yell as is only heard in American election meetings. Some of the slang, as "prospecting," "cantankerous," has been imported to England. "Sundown" and "sun-up" need no explanation; nor does the "fall" for autumn. "Varmin" means all sorts of wild animals.

By far the largest class of Americanisms are good old English words, which have become obsolete in the mother country, or have descended to the rank of provincialisms. Thus, to fetch, to trudge, folks, gal,

gumption, and even to squelch. Just as it is impossible for the language of any country to remain at a standstill, so is it impossible that two large nations separated by the Atlantic Ocean shall continue to speak the same tongue without constant divergencies of idiom arising. The wonder is that the United States, as large as all Europe, having forty millions of inhabitants welded together from all nations, should adhere so closely to the language of England.

We may also observe that the American "vocabulary of blasphemy" seems much less extensive than that of European nations. Curses and half curses are numerous enough, but the Puritan influence still avails to expel oaths from the mass of the population outside the large cities. With many people "Oh my!" constitutes the strongest and commonest asseveration. "Glory!" is a word often used as an exclamation of surprise or of emphasis, derived probably from usage in Methodist meetings. Others are less choice in their words, and different parts of the country vary much in this matter; but as a whole the comparison is favourable to the reputation of the nation. Newspaper writers and anecdote mongers are answerable for many of the oaths associated with the representative Yankee. On the other hand, American speakers and writers call a rascal a rascal, without hunting after a milder expression or fearing a charge of libel. Circumlocution is dispensed with, and the popular style is that which goes straight to the mark. This is not always the method of American authors, but it seems to be the prevailing tendency of the spoken language, and the influence upon the common English is wholesome.

Varieties.

COLOUR OF THE SEA.—All deep and clear seas are more or less of a blue colour, while, according to seamen a green colour indicates soundings. The bright blue of the Mediterranean, so often vaunted by poets, is found all over the deep pure ocean, not only in the tropical and temperate zones, but also in the regions of eternal frost. Scoresby speaks with enthusiasm of the splendid blue of the Greenland seas, and all along the great ice-barrier which under 77 deg. S. lat. obstructed the progress of Sir James Ross towards the Pole, that illustrious navigator found the waters of as deep a blue as in the classical Mediterranean. The North Sea is green, partly from its water not being so clear, and partly from the reflection of its sandy bottom mixing with the essentially blue tint of the water. In the Bay of Loango the sea has the colour of blood, and Captain Tucker discovered that this results from the reflection of the red ground soil. But the essential colour of the sea undergoes much more frequent changes over large spaces, from enormous masses of minute *algæ*, and countless hosts of small animalcule, floating or swimming on its surface.

RAILWAY TRAVELLING.—A civil engineer of long experience in connection with railways gives some reassuring statements as to the precautions taken in keeping the lines in order. The majority of accidents occur, not from defects in the line, but from imperfection in the living agents who have charge of the signals and other arrangements of trains in transit. The engineer says:—"To begin at the bottom, we have the ganger of the 'beat,' a man selected from the way-men after several years' service for his aptitude and steadiness, whose duty it is to patrol his length of two to three miles every morning, and to make good fastenings, etc., afterwards superintending his gang in packing, replacing rails, sleepers, and other necessary repairs. Over the gangers is the inspector of permanent way, responsible for the gangers doing their duty, who generally goes over all his district once a day on the engine, and walks one or more gangers' beats. The inspectors, again, are under the district 'superintendent' or engineer, who makes frequent inspections both by walking and on the engine. The ganger, if in want of

men or materials, reports to his inspector, who, if they are required, sends a requisition to the engineer, keeping a small stock at his head-quarters to supply urgent demands. The engineer in his turn keeps the whole in harmony, sanctioning the employment of the necessary men, and ordering the materials, the only check upon the number of men or quantity of materials being the total half-yearly expenditure. Directors never within my experience grudge an outlay necessary to keep the line in good order; but should they limit the expenditure from financial motives, it would then clearly be the duty of the engineer to recommend a reduction of speed to a safe point. Occasionally idle gangers are met with, who are always asking for more men, and as naturally meeting with refusal."

ROLLER-SKATES.—In an article on Skating Rinks in last year's volume, by Cuthbert Bede, reference was made to the appearance of roller-skates many years ago in England. We give the *facsimile* of an old Dutch picture representing a skater who performed publicly between the Hague and Schevening, in



August, 1790. A humorous little poem accompanies the picture, telling how a Moorish ambassador was astounded on seeing people walking upon solid water, but now a greater wonder has appeared, a skater on dry land. We suppose the letters L and R denote left and right.

UNSEAWORTHY SAILORS.—A contrast drawn between British and Chinese seamen, in a report by Consul Lay on the trade of Chefoo, is much to the disadvantage of the former. It is a noticeable feature, he says, that the crews of nearly all vessels employed on the coast, whether steamers or sailing vessels, are almost exclusively composed of Chinese. The only Europeans on board a sailing vessel, for instance, are the captain, chief mate, and a boatswain, the rest being Chinese. It is a very rare thing indeed to see a British vessel there with a crew of English seamen on board. The reason for this is not so much what it might at first sight be supposed to be—viz., that Chinese can be got for lower wages, the average rate of wages for able-bodied seamen being £3 10s. to £4 a month—as that ship-masters find less trouble in dealing with them than with Europeans. There is less of bringing them before the police-courts for drunkenness and disorderly conduct, or absence without leave.

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